

OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
EVELYN SANGUINETTI – LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

**Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Task
Force**
Meeting Minutes

Thursday, April, 2015
Conference Room A-1
Stratton Building
401 S Spring Street
Springfield, Illinois
4:00 PM

Name	Title	Organization	Present
Evelyn Sanguinetti	Lt. Governor	State of Illinois	Y
Tom Demmer	Representative	90 th District	Y
Mark Batinick	Representative	97 th District	Y
Jack Franks	Representative	63 rd District	Y
Emmanuel Chris Welch	Representative	7 th District	Y
Dan Duffy	Senator	26 th District	Y
Dale Righter	Senator	55 th District	Y
Martin A. Sandoval	Senator	12 th District	Y
Linda Holmes	Senator	42 nd District	Y
Karen Darch	Mayor	Barrington	N
Karen Hasara	Former Mayor	Springfield	Y
Brad Cole	Executive Director	Illinois Municipal League	Y
Ryan Spain	City Council Member	Peoria	Y
Dan Cronin	Chairman	DuPage County	N
Michael Bigger	Former Chairman	Stark County	Y
Mark Kern	Chairman	St. Clair County	Y
John Espinoza	Board Member	Whiteside County	Y
Rev. James T. Meeks	Chairman	Illinois State Board of Education	N
Dr. Darlene Ruscitti	Regional Superintendent	DuPage Schools	Y
Steffanie Seegmiller	Chairman	Arthur School Board	Y
M. Hill Hammock	Senior Fellow	Metropolitan Planning Council	Y
Char Foss-Eggemann	Trustee	Park Ridge Library Board	N
Warren L. Dixon III	Township Assessor	Naperville	Y
George Obernagle	Chairman	Kaskaskia Regional Port District	N
Non-Voting Member			

The Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates Task Force met for the first time on March 26, 2015 with Lieutenant Governor and Chair Evelyn Sanguinetti presiding.

MEETING LOCATION

Building: Stratton 1st Floor

Conference Room: A-1

Street Address: 401 S Spring Street

City: Springfield, Illinois

MEETING START

I. Call to order, Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti, 4:06PM CT

Roll call, Leah Guffey (Downstate Coordinator-Office of the Lt. Governor)

Of the twenty-four voting members serving on the task force, nineteen were present. Four members including Chairman Cronin, Mayor Darch, Chairman Obernagel, and Trustee Eggeman attempted to phone-in to the meeting but were unable to connect due to IT issues with the phone used at the meeting. Non-voting member Clayton Frick with Deloitte Services was present.

Quorum Reached

II. Chairman Remarks- Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti

- a. Executive order/Task Force overview
- b. Introduction of Task Force members
- c. Taskforce objectives
- d. Process for Members to introduce new business

III. Presentations

- a. Illinois Representative Jack Franks, Report of previous consolidation task force and member discussion
 - a. Rep Franks provided a report on the findings and challenges his previous consolidation task force uncovered
 - i. The existence of local governments is not accidental
 - ii. Local governments use taxpayer money to lobby state government
 - iii. The burden of financing these many units of local government is a drain on the pocket of the taxpayer
 - iv. This system of abundant local government is connected to the unpredictability of property taxes
 - v. Eliminating unnecessary local government is where focus should lie

- Representative Batinick asked if the commission received push back from local elected officials. Franks explained there is always going to be some form of push back when talking about consolidation.
- Hill Hammock asked Representative Franks to verify his understanding of the DuPage Consolidation bill and Franks new consolidation bill affecting McHenry County that if a county appoints a majority of local government board, that majority could vote to take the consolidation steps that Representative Franks discussed. Representative Franks confirmed and added the last Commission learned it was much easier to create new governments, but often there is no way to get rid of government or it is very hard.
- Michael Bigger noted that he has had similar observations, and has run into roadblocks when trying to consolidate within his county in the past. There are 15 counties with 10,000 people or less, and he tried to start a coalition amongst these counties for consolidation but experienced a lot of pushback even in taking little steps. Representative Franks affirmed that we need to enlighten citizens about how their tax dollars are being spent, and that taxpayers would be upset to learn that local governments are hiring lobbyists to defeat consolidation efforts in Springfield.
- Karen Hasara added that a twenty-three person volunteer commission was created in Sangamon County and their most successful measure was getting similar units of government to talk to each other. They now have an effective commission of mayors within Sangamon County. Representative Franks echoed that this was a good idea and that encouraging cooperation and shared services amongst similar units of government is important.
- John Espinoza said that many times taxpayers are not aware of the waste, and then gave an example of successful fire services consolidation in his county. He also argued that the willingness to consolidate is there if the people are made aware of the waste. The biggest obstacle is that no one wants to give up their kingdom.
- Warren Dixon III asked Representative Franks what the goals were of the prior commission. Representative Franks responded that their goal was not to consolidate just for the sake of reducing government, they wanted to first gain an understanding of the savings these efforts would bring. They concluded that simply consolidating does not always save money due to the various assets and liabilities of the taxing bodies involved.

They also found that there were sometimes local units that wanted to consolidate but were unable to do so, and therefore the commission wanted to empower local governments. On that note they found that a top-down approach was ineffective and that local governments do not want to be told what to do from Springfield.

Warren Dixon III agreed and emphasized that consolidation should not occur just for the sake of consolidating, and then asked what the premise was of establishing the total number of units of government in Illinois. Representative Franks responded they largely relied on data from the Comptroller's Office.

Warren Dixon III added that not all taxing bodies report to the Comptroller's Office so the number of units of government in Illinois may be even higher than reported.

- b. Brian Costin, Policy Director, Lt. Governor's Office- Brief overview of units of local government, unfunded mandates and corresponding research
 - a. Brian Costin provided a numerical-based overview on units of local government
 - i. There are two ways to count units of local government
 - 1. Recommended way to compare Illinois to other states is the US Census Bureau calculation method
 - 2. Also looked at how Illinois Comptroller calculates local governments in Illinois
 - ii. Unit of local government breakdown
 - 1. IL has highest number of municipalities, highest number special districts, third highest number of schools and townships
 - 2. Texas is nearest competitor, yet it has twice the population and five times the area as IL
 - 3. Not just the number of units of government that is concerning, but more so the layers of government
 - 4. IL unique because it is the only state where more than 50% of population had 3 layers of general purpose government (County, Municipal, Township)
 - iii. Local Governments Per Population
 - 1. IL has 54 units of government per 100K people
 - 2. Other large states have average of only 18 units per 100K people.
 - 3. IL has six times as many units of local government as Florida. Brian Costin argued that Florida's lower prevalence of local units of government is connected to the lower property and sales taxes observed in Florida.
 - iv. Comptroller's Breakdown
 - 1. Top 2 Units of Government are townships and Road and Bridge districts
 - 2. Others include school districts, drainage districts, fire, library etc.

3. Total is different from U.S. Census due primarily to Road and Bridge Districts
- v. IL Municipal League: New Unfunded Mandates
 1. 266 mandates since 1982- Average of 15 new mandates per General Assembly cycle since 1982
- vi. Illinois Association of School Boards
 1. 145 new mandates since 1992 for school districts
- vii. Research on Local Government Consolidation and Unfunded Mandates
 1. We need better estimates on cost of mandates to local government; we need local governments to submit information to task force.

- Representative Welch commended Brian Costin's presentation and the Lieutenant Governor for chairing this Task Force. He wants to look at smart consolidation, not just for consolidation purposes. He then gave a few examples of local government excess from his own district, including a township that is completely overlapped by a village, and noted the pushback that consolidation efforts receive.
- Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti remarked that task force members must go back to their communities and collect examples and information regarding the need for consolidation to create thorough reports.
- Brad Cole mentioned that since the compilation of data in the meeting slides, there is one less municipality due to self-dissolution. He reminded the Task Force that besides consolidation, dissolution is also an option. Hill Hammock asked Brad Cole to elaborate why that occurred. Brad Cole explained the Village of White Ash determined they did not have enough resources or people to carry out their duties.
- Representative Batinick then questioned what current law allows us to dissolve through referendum.
Brian Costin mentioned that an issue the Task Force will face is inconsistency across the board regarding laws for dissolution, and the Lt. Governor's office is preparing a report for the task force on all of the different consolidation laws.
- Clayton Frick of Deloitte then asked what occurred to trigger the observed growth of local government during the last 30 years. Brian Costin responded that there has been population growth around the Chicagoland area and increases in special districts. He also mentioned IL has constantly been the state with the most units of government.
- Warren Dixon III asked Brian Costin if he was assuming that high property tax in IL is correlated with the number of units of government. Brian Costin replied he does believe the high property tax in IL is connected to the raw number of units of government, but that he found the layers of government to be the most compelling as opposed to just the units.

- Michael Kern asserted that it is imperative to draw the line for unfunded mandates as a cut-off measure. He supported putting a constitutional amendment on the ballot to prevent additional unfunded mandates from being enacted until there can be a thorough review of these mandates. The current unfunded mandate legislation is ineffective and easily overridden.
- Representative Batinick observed that in his area, raw numbers of government units are the problem and provided an example involving fire departments. Warren Dixon III said that duplication must be identified and brought to the forefront. Hill Hammock emphasized that it is important to not only consolidate units of government, but make these units more transparent.

Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti then called to discuss New Business.

- Dr. Darlene Ruscitti discussed streamlining educational services. She gave examples including school districts pulling out of special education co-ops to provide their own improved services, and Education-for-Employment entities. Dr. Ruscitti also emphasized the need to get all of these programs under one umbrella so that services can be maximized.

Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti then motioned to limit public comment to three minutes per individual. Brad Cole moved the motion and Senator Dan Duffy seconded the motion. The motion was approved by majority ayes with no nays recorded.

MEETING END

Lieutenant Governor Sanguinetti then motioned to adjourn at 5:18PM CT. Representative Batinick moved the motion and Senator Linda Holmes seconded the motion. The motion was approved by majority ayes with no nays recorded.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

-Thursday, April 2nd, 2015 (Bloomington-Normal) from 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

McLean County Board Room (Room 400), 115 E. Washington St., Bloomington, IL 61701

-Wednesday, April 8, 2015 (DuPage County) from 1:00 PM - 4:00 PM

County of DuPage Board Room, 421 N. County Farm Road, Wheaton, IL 60187